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ABSTRACT

An intermediate to junior high level activity packet presents learning activities for improving student outlining, notetaking, and listening skills. In part I, students gain experience in the use of complete sentences, phrases, and word outlines by outlining reports, arranging facts and details into logical order, and writing from outlines. Part II helps students learn efficient ways to take notes from readings, lectures, and films. The final part presents tips and exercises for improving listening skills. The document is one of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center project. (LH)

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LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

A LEARNING ACTIVITY PACKET

CS 208 014

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INTRODUCTION

To the Teacher:

The purpose of this packet is to concentrate on information often assumed or overlooked in one convenient location.

Teachers, of course, should use all or parts of this packet as it fits into their curriculum. Some suggestions: (1) the packet may be used with younger students as an introduction to learning techniques, (2) as a review unit, and (3) as a reinforcer. Some of the material presented here is not original. I have combined and adapted materials from a variety of sources. Please consult the attached bibliography for full references.

LEARNING SKILL I - OUTLINING

Student Information Sheet

Part I - What is an outline?

DEFINITION: An outline is like a skeleton of a lecture or paper. Its main purpose is to show how something is organized. The outline shows the main points, how they are related to each other and the details that explain and fill out the main points.

There are three kinds of outlines:

1. Complete sentence outlines
2. Phrase outlines
3. Word outlines.

Compare examples of each kind of outline below:

1. Complete Sentence Outline

BOWLING

I. Bowling requires different types of equipment.

A. Bowling balls are most important.

1. There are different weights of balls available.

2. Finger holes can be custom drilled to fit the bowler's hand.

B. Bowling shoes are designed to slide.

II. Bowling alleys are fun places.

A. Bowling alleys often have automatic pin-setters.

B. Bowling alleys often have snack bars.

C. Sometimes you'll find pin ball and other recreation in alleys.

III. Scoring bowling takes a little practice.

A. Mark the whole box for a strike.

B. A slash indicates a spare.

C. Numbers show pins you knocked down.

2. Phrase Outline

BOWLING

I. Equipment used for bowling
   A. Bowling balls
      1. Weights of balls
      2. Custome-drilled finger holes
   B. Bowling Shoes
II. Bowling alleys for fun
   A. Automatic pin-setters
   B. Snack bars
   C. Other entertainment
III. Scoring bowling
   A. Scoring strikes
   B. Scoring spares
   C. Counting pins

3. Word Outline

BOWLING

I. Equipment
   A. Balls
      1. Weight
      2. Holes
   B. Shoes
II. Fun
   A. Pin-setters
   B. Snacks
   C. Pin-ball

III. Scoring

A. Strikes

B. Spares

C. Pins

The most commonly used outline is the phrase outline. It is the most flexible.

Part II - Uses of the Outline

What are outlines good for? How can you use them? Most students find outlines helpful in a couple of ways:

--- Use as a study aid.

Outline notes you take on lectures.

Outline notes on books and articles you've read.

--- Help you organize your thoughts when writing.

We'll spend more time on taking notes and outlining in later worksheets. For now, let's look at how outlining can help you when writing.

Have you ever started writing an assignment without really knowing where you were headed? You start a sentence and get half way through and realize you don't know how to finish it or why you started it the way you did.

Outlining can help. The outline becomes a road map for your paper. It lets you plan the best route to get where you want to go.

First we'll work through a sample topic making an outline, then, on the worksheet you will be asked to make an outline for a paper of your own.

OUTLINING EXERCISE I

DIRECTIONS: Below is a short report. Imagine that this student has been asked to read this paper and outline it.

MELODRAMA CHARACTERS

There are three traditional types of characters in melodramas. While there are, of course, others, the villain, the hero and the heroine are the most easily recognized.

There are many qualities that make a villain easy to recognize. Most often he will be tall, thin, dark-haired and have a long, dark mustache. He always wants to marry the heroine but never for love -- he usually wants to marry her to gain control of her property. He wears a cape and tall stove-pipe hat and has a sinister laugh.

The hero is just as different from the villain as he can be. Instead of oily and wicked, our hero is usually shy but strong, blond, and good-hearted. His clothes show he is honest and hard-working, but poor.

Putting the hero and the heroine together always makes a perfect couple. The heroine, too, is honest, poor and hard-working. She's always beautiful and innocent. Most often she is left to the mercy of the villain because she was orphaned and now can't afford to make the payments on the farm.

These three characters are the most common ingredients in an old-fashioned melodrama.

Melodrama Characters Outline

I. Villain
   - A. Looks
     1. Tall
     2. Thin
     3. Dark hair
     4. Long mustache
   - B. Clothes
     1. Cape
     2. Stove-pipe hat
   - C. Wants to marry heroine

II. Hero
   - A. Looks
     1. Strong
     2. Blond
     3. Handsome
   - B. Hard-working
   - C. Honest

III. Heroine
   - A. Beautiful
   - B. Hard-working
   - C. Innocent
   - D. Orphaned

Outlining Exercise I (cont'd)

Notice these things about the report and how it compares to the outline:

1. The roman numerals indicate main points.
2. Each main point is important to the over-all topic. They are all of about equal importance.
3. Sub-points (or details that explain the main points) are indicated by using capital letters.
4. Further sub-divisions are shown with arabic numbers.
5. Main points are often found in topic sentences of the paragraphs.

Here are some tips to remember when outlining:

1. Follow outline form. That is, Roman numerals furthest to the left. Capital letters indented about 4 letter widths.
2. If you have a "I" you must have a "II", and an "A" must have a "B". If you find it difficult to come up with a "II" or a "B" in a particular section, check your organization. You probably need to rethink the way you've arranged your main points.

OUTLINING EXERCISE II

DIRECTIONS: Below is a report similar to the one outlined for you in the sample. You should do the following:

1. Pick out the main ideas presented on science fiction.
2. Arrange them with roman numerals along the left-hand margin. Don't forget to leave room for sub-points.
3. Pick out sub-points under the main points they help to explain using capital letters to show each sub-point.

TYPES OF SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction lovers would agree that there are at least three major categories of science fiction.

The first class of science fiction centers around the idea of the time machine. The time machine can either take a person back in time to visit prehistoric creatures or throw him forward into the future. In the future you might encounter your great-great-great-great grandchildren.

Another type of science fiction involves creatures invading the earth. The creatures may be little green men from Mars, twelve-eyed monsters from Venus, or a creature who erupts from deep underneath the ocean. The creatures are sometimes good and sometimes evil.

Outlining Exercise II (cont'd)

A third kind of science fiction often involves a parallel universe. People usually get into this universe through a time warp. Once into the other world things are the double of things in our world. The people are twins of the people here, the towns and buildings are the same but there is usually one strange difference -- a difference in time or an evil ruler in power.

These are just three of the many types of science fiction.

In the space below, write your outline of the science fiction report:

OUTLINING EXERCISE III

DIRECTIONS: Below are listed some facts and details regarding choosing a job. Arrange them in logical order using outline form.

-- $5.00 per hour

-- boss pays medical insurance

-- grouchy boss

-- little chance for promotion

-- job looks interesting

-- have to drive 10 miles to work

-- nice office facilities

-- irregular hours

-- friend works for this company

-- car pool available

Now, in the space below, make an outline you could use if you were to turn these items into an outline for a report you would write on things to consider when choosing a job.

OUTLINING EXERCISE IV

DIRECTIONS: Pretend you were assigned to write a report on one of the following topics:

Dieting	Student Rights
Motorcycle Care	The Drinking Age
Five or Six Girl Basketball	Training an Animal
School Plays	The Perfect Year
The Best T.V. Shows	topic of your own choice

Then:

1. Choose your topic.
2. Make a list of 2 or 3 main points you would like to include in your paper on this topic.
3. Make a list of some details or examples or stories that show what you mean by each point.
4. Arrange these ideas into an outline.
   #2 should become your Roman numerals.
   #3 should become your sub-points.
5. To complete writing your paper you would add an introduction, conclusion and perhaps, a few transitional phrases to make it easy to see how one idea follows another.

LEARNING SKILL II - NOTE TAKING

Taking notes is something teachers often assume that students know how to do but all too often, teachers don't teach the skills that would make note taking easier.

Most frequently you take notes on material you hear--a teacher lecturing, a film or filmstrip, a guest speaker, etc. So let's concentrate on taking notes while you listen first.

There are several things you can do to make note taking easier:

1. Listen first. THEN start writing. Too often we start writing every word the lecturer says. There is no way we can keep up and we get lost. So,
2. Listen for main points. You can often pick these out by listening for one or more of these clues:
   A. General statements. Short with few details.
   B. Statements that are emphasized by the speaker.
   C. Numbered points.
   D. The word reason (Example: "The main <u>reason</u> for this is..."
3. Write quickly but be sure YOU can read it. Notes, after all, are to help <u>you</u>.
4. Use your own short hand. Abbreviate words that you use often. The word "example" might become "ex."; "main idea" might be "M.I." Sometimes using math symbols such as $\pm$, +, =, etc. is convenient.
5. Summarize what is said in your own way. This goes back to #1, don't try to write down everything.
6. Leave lots of room--wide margins--on your paper so you can go back later and fill in details.
7. Do plan to go back over your notes. Read them over so you're clear on what you meant. Fill in any missing information before you forget.

NOTE TAKING EXERCISE I

DIRECTIONS: Below is a sentence for a lecture. Rewrite it in your own way using incomplete sentences and your own abbreviations.

Sentence: The first important point to remember when refinishing furniture is to take time and patience.

Your rewrite: _____

_____

NOTE TAKING EXERCISE II AND III

DIRECTIONS: Below are two lectures. Have someone read the first one to you as if they were lecturing the class. Take notes. Then use your notes to answer the questions below. How helpful were your notes? Did you get the main points.

Then try the second one. Any improvement?

LECTURE I

"We're concerned today with th subject of why animals migrate. Some birds migrate thousands of miles in the spring and fall. Sometimes you see them flying in huge flocks right above this town. The golden plover breed in Alaska during the summer. Then they fly across the Pacific to spend the winter in Hawaii. The winters are much warmer there, of course. The birds probably set their course by the position of the sun and stars.

"Mammals like the caribou in North America migrate as much as 800 miles between their summer and winter feeding ranges. Some kinds of insects and fish also migrate.

"At one time, people believed that when birds disappeared in the winter they had flown to the moon or were hibernating in the mud at the bottom of ponds.

"One reason for migration is so that the food supply in one area will not be completely destroyed. When the animals move on, the food supply in the area can grow back. It will be ready the next time the animals come through. Of course, since hunters may be waiting for them, there may be fewer of them returning next year. That's what happened to the passenger pigeon, which is extinct, and the bison, which was almost wiped out.

"Another reason for migration may be that in the warm climate there will be food but not enough room for breeding grounds, since so many other species live there. In colder areas, the birds or animals would die during the long winter. But during the summer season, there will be food and plenty of room for breeding grounds."

QUESTIONS

1. How far can some animals migrate?_____

2. What kinds of animals migrate?_____

3. Before we knew about migration, what did people think happened to the animals when they were away?_____

_____

4. List two reasons for migration: _____

_____

LECTURE II

In the early days of Massachusetts, there was a time when good sense and justice seemed to be set aside. Innocent people lost their lives because of group hysteria.

It began in 1692 in Salem Village. This wasn't the famous town of Salem, but a small village not far from it. The name of the village was later changed to Danvers.

A group of young girls used to spend time with a slave named Tituba, who came from the West Indies. The girls were all under 20 years of age. Tituba told them about magic and fortune-telling. The girls also read books about witches. These were evil things to the people of Massachusetts in those days. They believed that witches did the work of the devil.

Two of the girls became sick. They began to have fits. They said they were under witches' spells. They said that the witches were Tituba and two unpopular women of the village. Then other girls accused other people of witchcraft. The suspected witches were put on trial. Some people confessed and accused others, so they would not be hanged. Others were executed by hanging.

The search for witches spread to other towns. Over 200 people were arrested. Twenty people were put to death. Many who spoke out against the trials were accused of witchcraft themselves and were arrested.

People finally could tolerate the situation no longer. They still believed in witches. But they thought people should not be hanged because of the kind of evidence that was given. The evidence, they thought, might be fake. And some of the people who were accused and executed seemed like good, honest people.

The governor of Massachusetts ordered the trials stopped. The accused witches were set free. The dark days of the witch hunt were over.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did the witch trials begin?_____

2. Who taught the girls about magic?_____

3. What did the girls say caused them to be sick?_____

_____

4. What happened to people accused and convicted of witchcraft?

_____

5. How many people were eventually put to death?_____

6. What stopped the trials?_____

NOTE TAKING EXERCISE IV (Optional)

LIRECTIONS: Try taking notes on the next film or filmstrip you see in class. Compare this with taking lecture notes.

NOTE: Too often we don't learn from films because we're not really trying to listen!

LEARNING SKILL III - LISTENING AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Often we hear but we don't really listen. Listening requires that you tune in, that you really concentrate on what's being said.

Listening tips:

1. Listen for main points. You'll often find the speaker states these at the beginning.
2. Listen for clue words, such as: "one reason...", "on the other hand...", "for example...".
3. Listen for a summary of main points at the end of a talk.
4. Listen for speaker emphasis--such as, louder voice, slower speech, pounding of the podium.

LISTENING SKILLS EXERCISES

Test your listening skills by trying the following:

1. Play the old telephone game. Use a fairly long sentence. Be sure the first speaker writes it down secretly to check at the end.
2. Make a journal of sounds in your home. Listen carefully for unusual noises.
3. Write a story of a journey described by a kidnap victim who was blind-folded. Remember, any sound clues could help police locate the hide-out.
4. Follow the directions read to you. Remember they will be read only once.

TEACHER SHEET - Directions for listening skills exercise.

Read the following to the students clearly.
Remember to read the list only <u>once</u>.

1. Take out a clean piece of paper.
2. Put your name in the upper right hand corner.
3. Write your mother's first name on the title line.
4. Number your paper 1 through 5 down the left-hand margin.
5. Put a star after number 2.
6. Write your birthdate for #1.
7. Write down the name of the day after tomorrow for #3.
8. For #4 write X, O, T, B and circle the letter that would be first in the alphabet.
9. If you have seen the movie Jaws II, mark a square for #5. If you have not, mark a triangle.
10. Turn your paper over and sit quietly.

LISTENING SKILL IV - USING YOUR TEXT BOOK WISELY

Taking notes on text books is very much like taking lecture notes. The important things to remember are:

1. Summarize just the main points. Don't try to rewrite the whole book.

2. Main points are often found in or near the first sentence of paragraphs.

Special helps--

Often textbook makers put in hints to help us recognize important points. Take note of them! These might include:

--Chapter headings

--Bold type

--Glossaries and pronunciation guides

--Study questions

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